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September-October 1973



## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 17, No. 5

September-October 1973

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Published bi-monthly by the Circus Historical Society, Inc., Publication, Advertising and Circulation office located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221. Advertising rate: Full page \$40.00; Half page \$20.00; Quarter page \$12.00. Minimum ad \$8.00.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$7.00 per year to members; \$8.00 to non-members in North America; \$8.50 to non-members outside North America. Single copy \$1.30. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Columbus, Ohio.

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### THIS MONTH'S COVER

The cover illustration for this issue is from the front page of an eight page color courier issued in 1915 by the Al G. Barnes Circus.

The original is printed in full color and is typical of the couriers printed by the Erie Litho Co. in the 1910-1920 period.

This courier, however, was printed by the U.S. Lithograph Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio. Erie and U.S. Litho were later joined with Strobridge in making one giant lithographing concern.

The original is from the Pfening Collection.

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### CIRCUS & CARNIVAL PHOTOS

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## CONVENTION REPORT

At the call of President Reynolds the 1973 convention of the Circus Historical Society was held in Baraboo, Wisconsin on August 3 and 4. Thirty-eight members signed the register for the second of the research-oriented gatherings begun at Reynolds' suggestion last year.

William Schultz, Director of the Circus World Museum, welcomed the group on Friday morning. A short business meeting followed and then three research papers were read. Friday afternoon Dan Draper outlined his lengthy and ongoing catalogue project. John Lenz gave a demonstration of his work in repairing and preserving lithographs in the collection. Robert Parkinson, Librarian, arranged a display of the program collection and later the recent lithograph acquisitions. The rest of the day was devoted to the individual research interests of the assembly. Friday night Bill Metzger, another staff member, ran a number of movies from the library collection.

On Saturday morning two more papers were read and short talks were given by John Kunzog and Tom Baron. Saturday afternoon was again given over to individ-

ual research. On that evening an informal dinner was attended by most of those present at the convention.

The papers read before the group, all of which will see eventual publication in *Bandwagon*, were those of Chang Reynolds, Fred D. Pfening III, Richard Flint, John Polacsek and Stuart Thayer.

### MUSEUM LOAN PROGRAM EXTENDED TO COLOR SLIDES

The Circus World Museum Library, of Baraboo, Wisconsin, has announced that it has added four sets of 2 x 2" color slides to its lending program. All of the slides are of circus lithographs.

Among the interesting and rare titles that are included in the sets are, Barnum & London, Carl Hagenbeck, W. W. Cole, Frank A. Robbins, Great Wallace, Howes Great London, John B. Dorris, Lemen Bros., Mighty Haag, Norris & Rowe, Orton Bros., Sig Sautelle, Yankee Robinson and Young Buffalo Wild West.

There are 90 slides in each of the four sets. A complete list is available from the Museum, so you may select a program for a meeting.

The Museum's list of movies available for organizations and groups has been in-

creased to 20. A large list of circus books is also available. Lists of all lending items are available.

The Circus Historical Society applauds the Circus World Museum for the entire lending program.

### BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON MAGAZINE

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All Issues	1966
All Issues	1967
All Issues	1968
All Issues	1969
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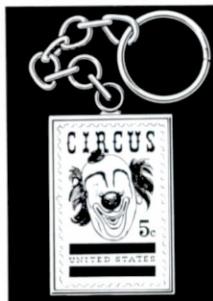
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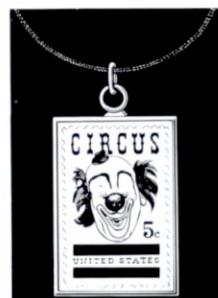
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*A Thousand Footnotes to History*

## CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM PRESENTS THE PAPERS OF WILLIAM P. HALL

By Tom Parkinson For  
The Circus World Museum

### PART FIVE

#### YOUNG BUFFALO WILD WEST

The cast of notable characters writing to William P. Hall from the Young Buffalo Wild West included Col. Fred T. Cummins, C. F. Rhodes, Vernon Seaver and assorted others in one of the most active exchanges of letters represented in the William P. Hall Papers at the Circus World Museum.

They planned new shows, conspired a little and ordered miscellaneous show property from Hall as if he were a Circus Sears Roebuck. They envisioned nothing but success and enjoyed some. Yet in the end the

Young Buffalo show went down the drain like most of the others. William P. Hall must have been repeating his continuous warning: "You'll be back. You'll be back. You'll be back."

Some of the letters were written before the authors had the Young Buffalo show or when one or another was away from it.

Hall would have known Cummins from the St. Louis World's Fair, where the Cum-

**Although this 1910 photo of the Young Buffalo Wild West has been published it is again being used to illustrate what a smaller wild west show looked like on the lot. The midway and side show are in back of the arena at the top of the photo.**

This Young Buffalo letterhead, used in 1913, is printed with the title in black outlined in gold on an olive background. The circle in the center is red with the figures at end in black. All letterheads are from the Circus World Museum Collection, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

mins Wild West & Indian Congress featured Geronimo, the Indian chief. Then Cummins moved to Chicago's amusement park, White City, for 1905, and from there wrote Hall. He said he and Charles Thompson were planning a wild west show on a Mississippi River steamboat. They would want eight wagons, 12 baggage horses and several lengths of blues. They already had 46



horses and four mules for the performance. (FTC-WPH 9/17/05). But that show never came off.

Instead, Cummins linked up with Walter L. Main and Sig Sautelle to frame a Cummins Wild West that claimed 30 cars, Dutch Albers' 14 mixed cars and Hale's Fire Fighters. Tom Mix was one of the cowboys and Calamity Jane was among the cowgirls. It was a stormy relationship. Cummins soon was prattled out. Later the quarters burned and took much of the show up in smoke. Cummins sued. Sautelle sold out. And the horse opera went to England. All without participation by William P. Hall.

Then C. F. Rhodes comes into this disjointed picture. It is surprising how many people wrote to Hall on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve; perhaps that was about their only idle time. Rhodes wrote the night before Christmas, 1909, on a letterhead proclaiming Navajo Ned's Wild West. Only, Navajo Ned had been crossed out in favor of a newly penciled title, Lone Bill's Wild West. Under whatever name, Rhodes wanted to lease six cars, wagons, seats and all for a new show. (CFR-WPH 12/24/09).

Just prior to New Year's Eve he wrote again, acknowledging that Hall would not lease but that they should talk about the possibilities of a deal anyway. That was on Vernon C. Seaver's letterhead, which now heralded him as proprietor of Lone Bill's Wild West. (CFR-WPH 12/30/09).

Two months later they had Young Buffalo's Wild West & Days of '49, and Rhodes was writing Hall about horses and ten lengths of reserved seats. (CFR-WPH 2/28/10). Seaver told the *Billboard* that Young Buffalo and Lone Bill had combined to comprise a 12-car show. (3/5/10). Rhodes was manager; M. C. Cookston was superintendent.

Next came a series of letters about purchasing a wide assortment of minor show property. Rhodes asked Hall why the seats had not arrived. (CFR-WPH 3/23/10). They sent \$165 for earlier purchases and ordered lead bars. (CFR-WPH 4/5/10). The show bought stakes, body poles, chocks, double trees and sledges. (CFR-WPH 4/8/10). In the same letter they said they would take a Yellow Journey Wagon, and I don't know what that is. They said the horses had arrived and were "A-One." They noted Hall offered to sell them rail-road cars.

Seaver replied later that he had already gotten his cars from the Venice Transportation Co. instead, but that he would need 10 to 15 baggage horses and some burros. (VCS-WPH 4/12/10). Presumably the same horses that were A-One on April 8 were those subject to severe complaint on April 12, this from Cookston. He urged Hall to write him at General Delivery, frequently a tip-off that the writer was afraid the show management would intercept personal mail. (MCC-WPH 4/12/10). That letter was setting Hall up for the next day's, when Cookston said one of the black horses had died and nine were sick.

The show got out of its Peoria, Ill.,



**A small bandwagon is shown in a 1911 parade of the Young Buffalo show. It is followed by a 20 oxen hitch pulling a covered wagon. Otto Scheiman Collection.**

quarters, where Seaver wrote Hall that they would buy the buffalo, that they sent Hall a check and that business was good. (VCS-WPH 5/31/10). Then the Hall papers go silent as the showmen get busy with troup ing; it's like astronauts going behind the moon.

When they came to writing life again, Rhodes had had enough. He was leaving this outfit and wanted stuff to frame his own. (CFR-WPH 10/1/10). Next they were in quarters with 34 baggage horses, 100 others and the desire for a bandwagon. (VCS-WPH 12/20/10)

The 1911 season got started with M. C. Cookston's acknowledgement of the arrival of two spotted horses from Hall. Young Buffalo Wild West would need the dimensions of the wagon Hall was sending so they could order new ranges to fit in it. (MCC-WPH 1/2/11). Later that month, they sent four horses to Hall and reported need for about 15 baggage horses to augment their stud of 27. Young Buffalo offered to sell Hall some harness they had gotten from Hagenbeck-Wallace. They also reported purchase of six Pullman cars (they told *Billboard* it was seven). The mattresses from those cars were surplus and perhaps

**Another Young Buffalo-Col. Cummins letterhead, also used in 1913, has the title in gold outlined in blue on a red background. The photos in the center are blue.**

Hall could sell them. No doubt these are the mattresses which Hall sold to Robinson Famous Shows within a month. Young Buffalo also asked about the new Coulter show, suggested a horse trade and bought two wagons. (MCC-WPH 1/22/11)

Seaver told Hall about the show's growth. It was on six flats, six stocks, eight Pullmans and two advance cars; they had invested \$50,000 last summer and another \$50,000 this winter. Therefore, he wrote, he might need credit on the \$7,000 worth of horses he got from Hall. Seavers was forthright about where he was paying cash and where he was seeking credit. He suggested paying Hall \$2,000 in cash and paying six percent on the balance, leaving the stock in Hall's name until it was all paid for. (VCS-WPH 2/3/11). Next he reported his chandelier wagon was in the shop to be fitted with scroll and sunburst wheels, that the stringer wagon was to have a new body, and that they wanted some spotted ponies. Although they claimed 22 cars in the prior letter, it was 20 cars now. (VCS-WPH 2/15/11). It seems they always wanted horses; this time it was a saddle horse big enough to carry 300 pounds for use by Young Buffalo himself, and it ought to be a flashy color of some sort — white spot, black or cream. (MCC-WPH 3/25/11)

At mid-season, Hall got a Young Buffalo letterhead with a message from H. S. Rowe. In the wake of the prior year's folding of his Norris & Rowe Circus, Rowe now found himself manager of the Young Buffalo Show, apparently succeeding Rhodes. Rowe was writing to say he wanted to start





his own show again. Did Hall have the stuff to outfit it? Did Hall think the Coulter show would survive or fold? Rowe reported, too, that Young Buffalo Wild West was making money. (HSR-WPH 6/11/11). The Young Buffalo show also wrote Hall that it had discontinued its cavalry act and therefore could sell 17 head of saddle horses. (MCC-WPH 7/26/11)

Fred Cummins was heard from again; he had been in Europe and now wanted saddle horses. (FTC-WPH 1/20/12)

Vern Seaver noted that Hall had offered him an elephant act. So he asked what kind of an act it was and what about the bull. Seaver had heard that some of Hall's elephants were good but that some had bad tempers. (VCS-WPH 2/3/12)

Characteristically, Hall came right back to challenge Seaver's comments about tough elephants. Mail deliveries in those times were good enough that they could have a full exchange within just three or four days. Only three days after writing his initial letter, Seaver had an answer and was mailing his own responses. (VCS-WPH 2/6/12)

He apologized for the crack about bad elephants. "If W. P. Hall says [anything] ... I'll gamble on it." It seems now that Seaver did want those elephants. But he asked again what they could do. He also was interested in the camels. Could an elephant pick up a burro?

The Young Buffalo show was known and is remembered for its long-string hitch of oxen. Seaver told Hall that they had lost eight oxen to fever in the South the prior year and that they would have a team of ten instead of 20 this year. His bucking steers were bucked out and would be converted to beef. Seaver also said that he had a bill car for sale, that he was going East this year on 20 cars, that he might need credit. Further he was thinking about buying out a disagreeable partner. As always he would need horses. Finally, Hall could submit a contract on the four elephants. (VCS-WPH 2/6/12)

The next day Cookston wrote that the show had seven flats, six sleepers, six stock cars and one advance car. He described the interior of a bill car that was for sale,

**Originally built for the Sells Bros. this shell band chariot was a feature of the Young Buffalo parade in 1911. Ben J. Kubly Photo.**

confirmed they would take the elephants and listed the stock they would need. Included were 20 draft horses, 15 broncos, and four steers. He also listed ten oxen, causing wonder about that long-string hitch, since Seaver had said they would not replace the lost ones. We know from pictures that Cookston's version won out and they had 20 again. (MCC-WPH 2/7/12)

Col. Fredrick T. Cummins was reported as part of the firm when Billboard said the show opened (BB 3/9/12). Young Buffalo letterheads showed Cummins Far East as part of the title in 1912 and 1913.

In May, Young Buffalo people wrote that business was okay, that Hall's horses were okay, but that Hall's bull men were drunks and that the elephants did not perform an act. Seaver had written earlier to complain about the elephants, they said, but Hall failed to answer. (MCC/VCS-WPH 5/22/12). So despite that first exchange about Hall's bad elephants, he had sent a ringer act to Young Buffalo after all.

During the summer of 1912, the show

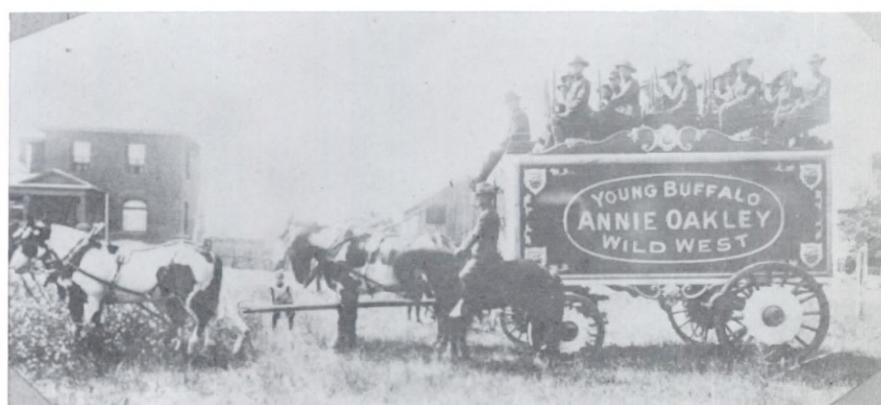
**Annie Oakley appeared with the Young Buffalo show one season and was featured on this bandwagon. Woodcock Collection.**

paid Hall for his horses. They sent \$1,023 on the note plus \$500 on the elephant rent and asked that the cancelled note be mailed to their Chicago office. They had referred a possible new customer to Hall, something many showmen made sure of reporting to Diamond Billy whenever the chance came up. Seaver said his business was always better than the nut. (VCS-WPH 7/25/12) In August they sent \$1,000 plus 4.5 percent interest on the Hall horse account.

Young Buffalo closed in September and on consecutive days they wrote to Hall about the elephants and camels. On September 24, Seaver wrote to transmit \$500 for elephants, report closing plans, and tell Hall they would be returning his elephants and camels for the winter. On September 25, he wrote for instructions about sending the animals back to Lancaster.

Fred Cummins had a chance to moonlight during the winter and his letter to Hall brought out an interesting statement. In his offer to represent Hall in the rental of a menagerie to Publiones, the Cuban circusman, Cummins said:

"You know I am thoroughly reliable and have that reputation with everyone and to make it doubly sure I want to say that I have not touched even a glass of beer for more than three years." That would account for back to 1909 but leaves open the matter of his drinking in the days of the



world's fair and his deal with Walter L. Main. (FTC-WPH 10/1/12)

Hall apparently authorized Cummins to proceed with an offer to the Cuban showman, but trouble set in. Cummins wrote that Max Gruber and Wilson of the Buffalo Bill show "butted in" and got that Cuban business. He offered to return the \$100 which Hall had paid him, but didn't enclose it. (FTC-WPH 10/26/12)

In an undated letter, Cookston wrote Hall about the 1912 experience with Hall's elephants and camels. He noted that Hall reported their safe return to Lancaster. Cookston said that the camels never would carry that platform for the dancing girls, so they did no act. They just stood around the show and made parade. The elephants also did no act. Facing this fact, the show tried to get them to do elephant races, but the bull man couldn't handle that either. So the elephants appeared only in the parade. Cookston urged that Hall adjust the price. (MCC-WPH, fall, 1912)

Young Buffalo had 21 teams rented out in Peoria for winter jobs that would last to about December 1. They asked Hall how cheaply could they winter stock, including 100 bronchos and cattle at Lancaster. (YBWW-WPH 11/4/12)

In December Seaver wrote to Hall about a new elephant deal. Could Hall duplicate the elephant act that Max Gruber had on the Cody show? (VCS-WPH 12/15/12) In January he typed a letter of agreement involving Art Eldridge and three elephants. The show would pay \$200 weekly if Hall would throw in the horse that Eldridge was breaking to work with one of the elephants and a pair of large sacred cattle broken to a two-wheeled cart. (VCS-WPH 1/12/13)

Seaver wrote Hall in February to hasten the return of the agreement on the elephants, pony and sacred oxen, so there would be time for ordering the special one-sheets and 16-sheets. (VCS-WPH 2/18/13)

By time for the show to open (April 24), the animal deal had been completed and after a couple of weeks on the road it was Col. Cummins who wrote in glowing terms:

"I never would have known that the elephants you shipped this year are partly those we had last year, if I had not been told. They certainly do a fine act and work fast and I consider them the hit of the show. Your man seems most competent and handles them with ease." (FTC-WPH 5/10/13)

That the act was good came through in several reports, some of them in other letters to Hall in subsequent years. But at the time the new elephant trainer, Art Eldridge, didn't see things quite the same.

He wrote a long account of how he was trying to hold down the expenses; one wonders if Hall had called him on this. He was drawing an average of \$6.25 a week in wages for himself. There was a time when he had to draw more to buy his wife a hat and shoes. He had used \$65 to buy a stock of cushions, but Seaver wouldn't let him sell them. These undoubtedly were seat

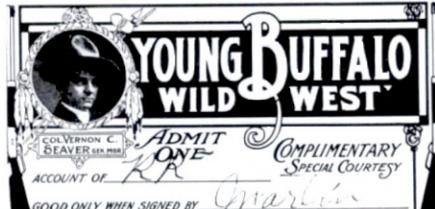
cushions he would have sold to customers of the show.

Eldridge went on to complain about the cookhouse but said there was a second cookhouse with good food for Manager Cookston and the Main men. Since Eldridge capitalized "Main" there is no way to tell if he meant the principal bosses on the show or those that came from the old connection with Walter L. Main. He said the show was arriving late — 10 or 11 a.m. on most days.

Eldridge said that "if it wasn't for making my word good with you, I wouldn't have stayed here overnight." But he did see some light at the end of the tunnel:

"Now they are going to put on two joints in the side show, and I have the promise of working on one of them."

Indeed, the Young Buffalo show did add grift for 1913, after being free of it in earlier years. Other sources say this came late in the season, so Eldridge may have had to wait quite a while.



Seaver and Cummins weren't getting along either. By the end of the 1913 season, Cummins was openly advertising in *Billboard* for someone to buy out Seaver in October. Undoubtedly, business was bad here as it was on nearly every show in 1913.

In February Seaver wrote to Hall that he was sending him two railroad cars for sale at \$2400, or enough to square the two notes still held by Hall. In other words, he was sending Hall equipment rather than cash. And he wrote in a melancholy tone:

"Have not decided yet just what will be done with Young Buffalo, but she will go out. I may handle her myself and I may not. Trying to get W. E. Franklin interested." (VCS-WPH 2/19/14)

After it did go out for 1914, he reported rain was hurting, but that two days at Detroit brought good business. He paid \$200 on horses. (VCS-WPH 6/29/14) But that was about the last of it. Other sources have told of the collapse of the show July 28 at Alton, Ill. Those new grifters led a minor riot as cowhands sought their money and their own horses. Cookston was jailed.

Then it was William P. Hall to the rescue. He put up bail for Cookston and offered \$10,000 for the show. The first \$2,000 was to pay the performers and to ship the Indians home. The other \$8,000 was payable when the show stuff reached Lancaster. Most of the show ended up at the Hall Farm, except for several cars which Seaver owned individually and per-

haps some which went to Venice Transportation Co. But the Hall Papers make no mention and give no further details of the folding.

The final letter in this set came from Seaver as an offer to buy animals for someone that would send them abroad. They wanted 15 camels, 12 donkeys and two elephants. Could Hall supply these? (VCS-WPH 10/29/14) Later Seaver was to have concessions at the 1915 fair in San Francisco.

The last note at hand about Fred Cummins is that he was on the front door of the 101 Ranch Wild West in 1915. From that point he could look out over the midway and see C. F. Rhodes, a 101 talker, making first openings on the Ranch's side show that season. Their thoughts must have turned occasionally to William P. Hall, who then had their show, their horses, his elephants and considerable of their cash. It was a familiar story.

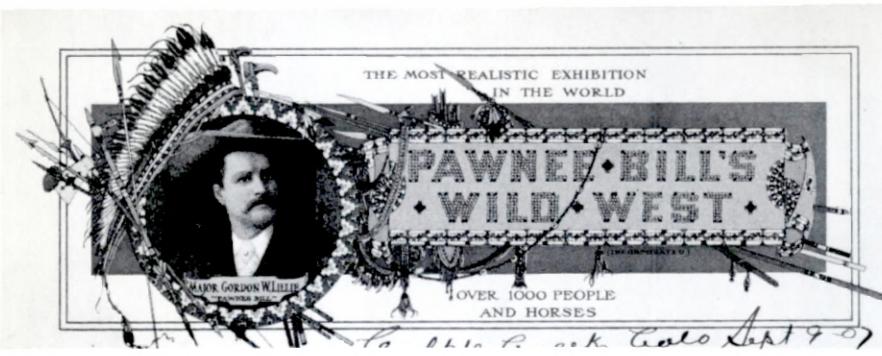
## GORDON LILLIE "PAWNEE BILL"

By the passage of time and the concentration of effort by numerous circus historians an unusual combination of documents and artifacts has been brought back together after some 65 years. The correspondence between William P. Hall and Gordon (Pawnee Bill) Lillie tells considerable about how the circulation began. And now, not only these letters, but also some of the documents to which they refer and even a principal wagon that was a subject of the whole affair are at the Circus World Museum at Baraboo.

Initial Pawnee Bill letters in the William P. Hall Papers are routine. In 1906, Pawnee Bill offered to buy five elephants from Hall. And about that time Joseph Lynch, who had the Pawnee Bill cookhouse, wrote that he would sell the cookhouse plant just as loaded at the end of the prior season. It included three ranges, two tents, one wagon and all the gear to feed 350 to 400 people. The price was \$2,000. "I'll be on Pawnee Bill's show again. He tells me he bought your elephants," wrote Lynch.

Then in 1907 Pawnee Bill wrote the first of the letters more significant to wagon lore and circus history:

"Since my last talk with you, I have made an inventory of show property, and will sell you my show complete, viz: 23 cars, 25 parade wagons, 16 baggage wagons, all canvas, trappings, harness, lights, seats and everything complete, just as it is in operation today, for \$35,000," he wrote. "The livestock I will put in all of it at \$40,000." Lillie wrote that Hall must move quickly since Pawnee Bill would necessarily sell by the middle of the month if at all. Otherwise, he had to start contracting people for 1908. Pawnee Bill closed the letter with a request that Hall would "kindly return enclosed estimates." (GWL-WPH 9/3/07).



In an interim letter, Lillie said that the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch people had inquired about buying the Pawnee Bill show but declined, apparently because of the price. (GWL-WPH 9/9/07).

Next, Pawnee Bill had this to say:

"Friend Hall:

"In yours of September 5th, you say I put too high a value on my show property. To show you that I have put it in at 50% on the dollar of what it cost me, I am enclosing some old bills showing what I paid for some of this property, and all of this I put in at less than 50% on the dollar. Look these over and reconsider the matter, as I am very anxious to sell and will sell this property for the quality cheaper than any property was ever sold before.

"Yes, no doubt I could sell to the Millers, if I would sell their way. They write me they have not the cash to pay down, and if I want to sell I want cash or bankable notes.

"These cars, wagons and paraphernalia of all kinds is in first class shape and cannot be compared as to price and quality with Gollmar Bros., Campbell Bros., and such shows. I would like you to come and look the property over. I think you would be

**The above Pawnee Bill Wild West letterhead, used in 1909, is truly beautiful. It is lithographed in five colors. The title is blue on yellow, within a gold box. The drawing of Gordon Lillie and the Indian headdress is in full color.**

fully satisfied that the price which I name is cheap.

"I have an organ wagon run by electricity which I paid cash \$3,800 for. Also two other parade wagons I paid over \$3,000 for the two and can produce proof of this. Also a calliope made by Sullivan & Eagles two years ago cost me \$1900. Bud Horn says it is the best one on the road. And my cars and property is all of first class quality. Come or send some one on and look my stuff over.

"Only last week the Bonheur brothers looked my private car over and enclosed is their letter accepting it if I want to sell to them.

"Please return these bills of sale when

**This interesting tableau band wagon was built for and used by the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show. Ringling Museum of the Circus Collection.**

you are done with them. Also Bonheur's letter. I will write you tomorrow about the South African business, etc.

"With my best wishes, I am your true friend, G. W. Lillie "Pawnee Bill". (GWL-WPH 9/28/07).

Well, Bill Hall just never got those bills of sale back to Pawnee Bill. It seems clear they stayed at Lancaster and came into the hands of Col. Bill Woodcock, principal circus historian and one-time Hall employee. From the Woodcock Collection, these documents went partly to the Pfening Collection and partly to the Circus World Museum.

Now the Museum holds, not only the long-separated letter and bill of sale, but also the Pawnee Bill bandwagon, one of the gems that Lillie was trying so hard to sell to Hall.

After a few days, Pawnee Bill wrote to ask again for the bills of sale. This letter holds special interest because of its reference to the Pawnee Bill bandwagon — the Columbus-John Smith wagon—as we know it today at the Circus World Museum. It states:

"Friend Hall,

"Some time ago I sent you some receipted bills of my bandwagon, Jap wagon, cars, etc. Won't you kindly return these to me as soon as you are through with them.

"This bandwagon is as fine as anybody's wagon and cost exactly the same price as the one ordered the same year by the Barnum show. And is today the finest wagon in show business. I put it in at less than 50% of the cost. I mean business and want to sell my show. If you think you can handle it, come on or send some one and look the property over. You will find it much better than you think. Write me.

"Your true friend, G. W. Lillie "Pawnee Bill" (GWL-WPH 10/9/07).

Two days later he wrote to say that he knew nothing of the particulars of running a show in South Africa, didn't even know when the season would be. But he went ahead and suggested 15 to 20 Sioux, cowboys, Cossacks and other standard Wild West features. He urged Hall to come to Oklahoma and discuss it. This and the other reference indicate that Hall was urging Lillie to frame a show to take to South Africa, where Hall's brother was operating a branch of their horse business. (GWL-WPH 10/11/07).

Several months later Pawnee Bill turned down Hall's offer to buy his elephants and said that he could not accept less than \$7,000 for them. (GWL-WPH 4/1/08) Could these be the same elephants that Hall had sold to Lillie as per the 1906 letter? In any case, Pawnee Bill later sold his cars and wagons to the Mighty Haag Shows and the elephants and camels to Campbell Bros. Circus.

The final Lillie letter in the William P. Hall Papers came some years later, and now he was trying to lease four camels and four elephants from Hall. He also wanted 25 head of draft horses, 1600 pounds, five to eight years, at \$250 each. "If interested,



I'll send Tom Smith to meet you," he wrote. Smith was an associate of Pawnee Bill's in several reported efforts to get back on the road, although this particular letter was written while Lillie was active in the Two Bills show. (GWL-WPH 1/21/13).

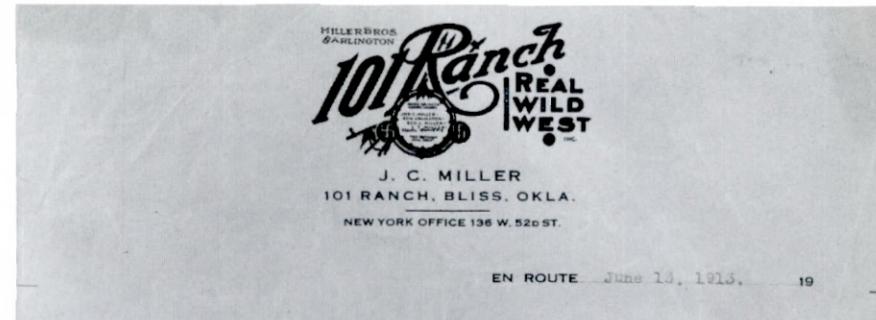
## MILLER BROS. 101 RANCH

With the Miller brothers of Oklahoma's famous 101 Ranch, William P. Hall found fellow horsemen. There business contacts involved not only the wild west and circus business but also the horse business in which both continued, as indicated by the William P. Hall papers in the archives of the Circus World Museum.

The first link indicated by these papers came in 1912, when Joseph C. Miller wrote about buying 16 dapple or black horses from Hall. (JCM-WPH 12/28/12) A month later, George Arlington, general manager of the Miller-Arlington 101 Ranch Show, wrote to see if Hall could sell them a stringer wagon, calliope and tableau. (GA-WPH 1/20/13) It will be recalled that the Ranch show had sustained a railroad wreck the prior fall in which several parade wagons, including the calliope, were lost.

The Hall papers some times seem rather complete but more often there are reminders that much is still absent from our knowledge of Hall and his business affairs. Thus, we do not have the letters to tell about horse trading that led up to the letter Joe Miller wrote on June 13, 1913. He mentioned information from Hall about shipping mules to Germany — Hall had not fared well in the mule business with Hagenbeck and other dealers. And then Miller took the professional horse trader's stance in regard to what he counted as a bad deal from Hall. He referred to a faulty mare included in their recent swap, and said he'd leave the matter up to Hall.

"If you do nothing at all, I will not make any kick. I presume I should have tried the horses out. . . ." Thus, Miller reflected the



**This 1913 Miller Bros. 101 Ranch letter-head was used as personal stationery by Joseph C. Miller. The title is red outlined in blue, additional type is blue also.**

same attitude as other horsemen in citing but accepting bad deals.

Then he changed his tack. After stating that business for the show was better than ever, Miller said:

"Everyone who sees our stock says we have the best bunch of horses they have ever seen on the road. The others I have are equally as good as those I got from you." Thus, Joe Miller, had just complained about one mare, but credited Hall with supplying him with excellent horseflesh as the rule. (JCM-WPH 6/13/13)

Further correspondence here has to do with the Millers asking Hall to take part in their contract to supply 3,000 cavalry and artillery horses to the Greek army. The contract for this sale is included in the papers. In it an Englishman, Grant Hugh Browne, of London, contracted with the Greeks to supply the horses, and he assigned the contract to the Millers at their 101 Ranch. They had gathered several hundred horses, met with Greek army inspectors, and shipped the stock from the port of Galveston. For their next shipment, the Millers said they believed Hall could get a higher quality of stock in Missouri than

**The Indians versus the Cowboys in a push ball contest in the arena of the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West during the 1916 season. Burt Wilson Collection.**



75

they had gotten in Oklahoma. So they further assigned part of the contract to him; they invited him to furnish 250 or 300 horses to them for the Greeks. At the time of George L. Miller's letter, Hall was selling them 250 head. (GLM-WPH 10/28/14)

Hall and the Ranch show had other dealings that involved show wagons and elephants, but those are not mentioned in surviving papers.

## FRANK A. ROBBINS

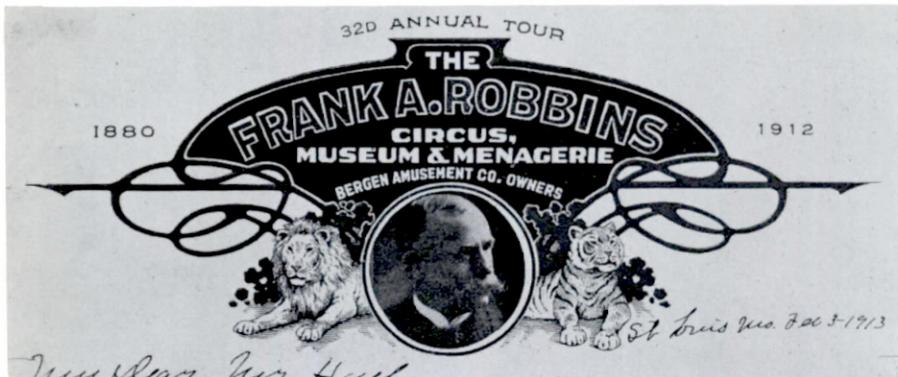
Whether by mutual agreement or self-appointment, Frank A. Robbins seems to have taken a special role in connection with the William P. Hall operation. The several Robbins letters found in the William P. Hall Papers indicate that he may have been a partner or representative of Hall's in some transactions, especially those dealing in wild animals.

Their first exchange was standard in that Robbins told of his own needs. And then he told Hall of some potential customers. Robbins would want 20 baggage horses, "all to be blocks, greys preferred." Robbins said that "We could use an advertising car and two stock cars if they could be purchased at right figure." He was dickering with someone else about elephants.

"I was in Birmingham the other day, and there was a world of showmen there, and there seems to be a big demand for show stuff," Robbins said in reference to the Sells & Downs sale. "Mr. Frank Tate . . . is in the market for flat cars and baggage wagons for a fire show he is about to put out." We know now that Hall filled those needs.

It was so early in Jerry Mugivan's career that Robbins felt called upon to explain who he was. "Jerry Mugivan, manager of the Van Amburgh Shows, Atlanta, Ga., wants considerable stuff. No doubt you will hear from all these people through the Clipper. If I see or hear of anybody who wants anything I will write you." (FAR-WPH 1/30/06)

It was several years before Robbins wrote again, if the papers are a guide; at least the next letter is from 1912. And it poses a question. Robbins wrote from his St. Louis quarters just before Christmas. He reported Mr. Gehm would write about the cost of the roof on the elephant car. Gehm was head of the Venice Transportation Co. and



may have been doing some repairs for Hall and Robbins.

Robbins planned to load the flat soon, and he would add Cage 11 to the load for \$150 if Hall agreed. "It needs a little repair but the images and pictures ought to be worth that," said Robbins. So apparently, Hall was buying up some surplus stuff from Robbins. Showmen of the time usually referred to wood carved figures as "images." (FAR-WPH 12/23/12)

Several 1913 letters survive. In the first, Robbins states that he is coming to Lancaster. "There are many things to talk over. There is quite a market for leopards, especially young and gentle ones that the picture show men can use. I think we can bring in almost anything now. Camels are in big demand, although Ruhe is bringing in some." So it sounds as if Robbins and Hall are into something together about importing and reselling animals. (FAR-WPH 1/19/13)

In a September letter, Robbins sends \$100 to apply on notes with Hall: "I am sorry to be so long." Robbins planned to sell 17 horses and asked the name of Hall's Philadelphia representative:

"I am going to furnish Nuggets with a menagerie and would like to sell you the animals afterward . . . I would take the pay in horses. I will have to have 20 next spring and ought to have 28. If you send me to

**Although the year 1912 is printed on this Frank A. Robbins letterpaper, the date of the letter is February 1913. The title is red outlined in white on a black background. The outline and designs on either side are in gold.**

Europe and we make money, will get 28 . . ." Thus it appears that their deal involved sending Robbins to Europe to buy animals. (FAR-WPH 9/11/13)

The final 1913 letter has several points of interest. First, Robbins was planning to tour his own circus again as usual, and he would hire the girl who worked Hall's elephants if possible.

Second, the war, though not named, was affecting the animal business. "I do not believe we could get any animals in from Europe. We can get animals in from England, but they will not let anything into England," Robbins wrote. Hall had distributed a list of animals for sale and sent copies to people in the movie business.

Then Robbins came up with a perceptive statement about show business in eastern and western territory:

"Show business in the west is a joke,"

**This corner statue carving tableau was used as a ticket wagon on the Frank A. Robbins Circus. Circus World Museum Collection.**



he said. "I can send one man and put up 200 window lithographs and pull on any vacant lot here and get more than the biggest day in Iowa. The total payout would not be over \$125."

With this letter was one which Charles Ives had written to Robbins in response to a *Billboard* advertisement offering to sell the Robbins show. In reply, Robbins said he had decided not to sell and referred Ives to Hall. Perhaps that's all there is to the story, but one wonders if the ad might have been placed to smoke out new people interested in show property. Ives did write to Hall; that letter also survives and is described in the chapter on Al G. Barnes. (FAR-WPH 10/20/13)

Things kicked along about the same way in 1914. Robbins had been unable to buy the bears he and Hall seemed to have discussed. (FAR-WPH 3/16/14) The final Robbins letter is from 1914 and documents the buying and selling of animals. "There is still due me \$253, and anything you might see fit to allow me for buying."

"There will not be any animals come in from any country this winter. I thought I would go quietly any place there is any and ship to you, but if my judgement is not good, there would not be any use." There are statements on animal deals and a list of dates on which notes were paid toward a \$2100 purchase of a car and wagons. (FAR-WPH 8/7/14)

Robbins said he was short of money and needed their settlement. That was a forerunner of things to come, for in a year Robbins had lost out with his circus. It was sold off and he retired from show ownership.

## MIKE WELSH

The Welsh Bros. Circus played an up-and-down career in the 1890s and 1900s, with wagons, two-car outfits, and flat car shows, culminating with a 14-car circus in 1904. George, John and Mike Welsh took it in and out of Lancaster, Pa. Mike wrote a few letters from Lancaster, Pa., to Lancaster, Mo., with two of them surviving in the William P. Hall Papers.

One is of uncertain date. Its letterhead includes 1909 in the printing, but Mike Welsh dated it April 14, 1901 and that has to be wrong. One guess is that he meant 1910, but others may be just as valid. He wrote that he wanted to buy property for a five-car show, which he said would include one sleeper, one stock car, two flats and one advance car, plus a "tablo" and cross cages. Welsh's comment makes the letter more significant:

"The biggest money the Welsh Bros. ever made was with a five-car show—\$14,000 in 22 weeks . . . But we had to make 14-car show," he lamented. And of course, they lost their bankroll with the bigger show. Now Mike Welsh was calling at Hall's circus store with a view to troup ing five cars again. (MHW-WPH April 14, 1901 — sic.)



Mike Welsh used this letterhead during the 1916 season. It is printed in deep red.

There is not much evidence that the Welshes had any show in 1910, but in 1911 they did launch a nine-car show. Someone must have changed Mike's mind again. John Welsh retired in 1915 and they sold eight cars to Al F. Wheeler.

So Mike was ripe again. He seems to have spent the 1916 season with the Great Sheesley Show, and it was from there that he wrote Hall.

He wanted five or six 60-foot flats, two or three stock cars and two sleeping cars, as well as some of those "tablo" wagons. (MHW-WPH 11/17/16).

There is no evidence here that Hall did

The midway annex of the Welsh Bros. Circus featured "Spanish Beauties." The dancers appear on the bally platform as the talker turns a tip before a group of circus goers. P. M. McClintock Collection.

or did not sell anything to the Welsh show, despite the inquiries. And in any case, 1915 seems to have been the last time the Welsh title was on the road. In that last letter at least, Mike Welsh was dreaming that eternal dream of circusmen for one more chance with a ten-car show.

### SUN, CHRISTY & ORTON

Sun Bros., Christy Bros., the Ortons and Bulgar & Cheney comprise a cross section of the little shows that correspond with William P. Hall, and some of that correspondence survives now at the Circus World Museum as part of the William P. Hall Papers.

The Orton letters start off with R. Z. Orton's reporting on their experiences with a car or truck in 1914. "We had the time of our lives getting home with our machine," he wrote. "It had the wagon show experience skinned two to one." (RZO - WPH 1/16/14)



### WAGON SHOW

There is virtually nothing in the Papers about details of the Orton's railroad show, its framing or its folding. But an undated letter refers indirectly to it. In the latter, Dave Jarrett, a former Orton employee, asks Hall, "What do you know of this Orton bankruptcy affair?" He held a note for salary due and a bank had told him he might get 15 cents on the dollar. (DJ-WPH undated)

## Orton Bros. Circus

1928

### OFFICIAL ROUTE SUNDAY SIXTH WEEK

Conde, S. D.....	June 4
Mellette, S. D.....	June 5
Chelsea, S. D.....	June 6
Cresbard, S. D.....	June 7
Ipswich, S. D.....	June 8
Leola, S. D.....	June 9

### SUNDAY

Eureka, S. D.....	June 11
Artas, S. D.....	June 12
Zeeland, N. D.....	June 13
Strausburg, N. D....	June 14
Linton, N. D.....	June 15
Hazelton, N. D.....	June 16

### SUNDAY

Steele, N. D.....	June 18
Permanent Address	
DALLAS CENTER, IOWA	

Issued by  
Cecil "Eddie" Gammon  
Mail Agent

But the Ortons kept trouping by one way or another. At the end of the 1928 season they asked Hall if they could deliver Old Jennie the elephant to him at Oklahoma City rather than Lancaster. (OB-WPH 12/10/28). Soon after that, Nellie Orton wrote to tell Hall that Criley Orton had died but that the circus would be continued. (NO-WPH 2/23/29) In May of that year Miles Orton sent \$100 as payment on elephants. Another letter identified the elephants as Elsie and Sadie. In August there was a letter to transmit \$300 for elephants.

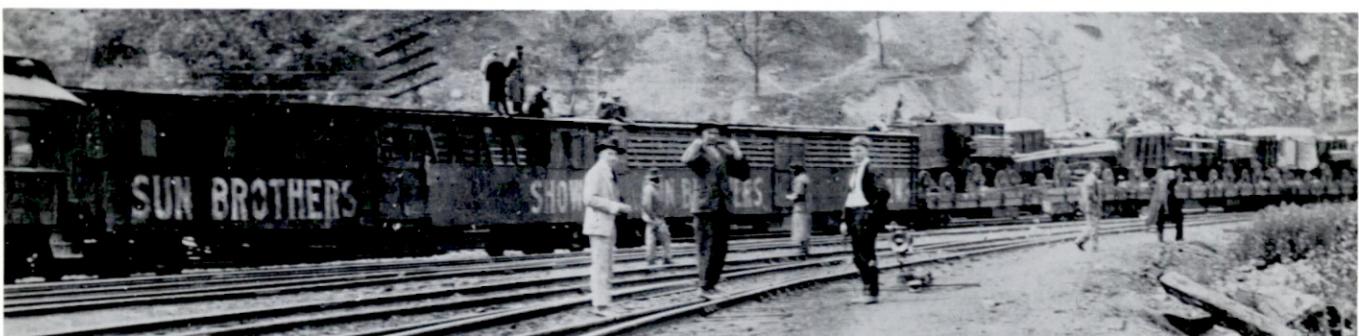
Sun Bros. Circus asked Hall about their buying a carload of grey horses in 1905, when Hall was just getting his own show underway. (SB-WPH 3/16/05) In 1916 they were interested in harness and canvas. (SB-WPH 8/12/16)

Between these two letters came an interesting epistle from Pete Sun. He declares a plan to sell the show and retire but gives



In 1910 the Sun Bros. used this letterhead. The title is white outlined in black on a gold background. "Greater Progres-

sive Shows" is white on a red background, the circles around the photos of George and Pete Sun are red.



assurance he will continue to work as if he were keeping the show. It was just as well, because the sale didn't come off at this time. The letter provides an interesting resume of the Sun Bros. layout, however.

There were nine railroad cars that had cost \$15,000 and were worth at least \$10,000 now; elephants that had cost \$5,000 untrained and now were worth \$10,000; other animals worth \$3,000; ring stock at \$2,000; a new ticket wagon that had cost \$1,000; five new cages; 11 baggage wagons built in Macon at a cost of \$300 each; and other assorted show gear. Pete Sun said it was worth \$40,000 but he would let it go at \$25,000. (PS-WPH 11/24/14) There is no indication, however, that Hall bought anything from Sun, and the circus continued.

The Christy letters cast some new light on the history of that show. In an undated letter, G. W. Christy told Hall that his show would winter at Beaumont, Texas, rather than Belleville, Ill., as had been considered. Christy planned to build 12 new cages during the winter and had loaded up his wagons with good oak lumber in recent stands. He was in Louisiana at the time and said that such lumber cost \$12 a thousand there and \$150 in Beaumont. (GWC-WPH 10/21 undated)

On October 27, 1920, Christy told Hall he needed a flat car, elephants and animals. On January 6, of an unspecified year,

Christy wanted to lease a pair of baby elephants in February, 1924.

In another letter for which the year is unknown, Christy recalled that Hall "spoke of buying a circus for your boy." So Christy offered them Lee Bros. Circus, which had 15 cars, all new baggage wagons and several new tableau wagons. (GWC-WPH 9/20 undated)

## LA MONT BROS.

LaMont Bros. Circus cages are mentioned several times in the William P. Hall Papers by various showmen interested in buying them. The Papers also include letters having to do with Hall's purchase of that show.

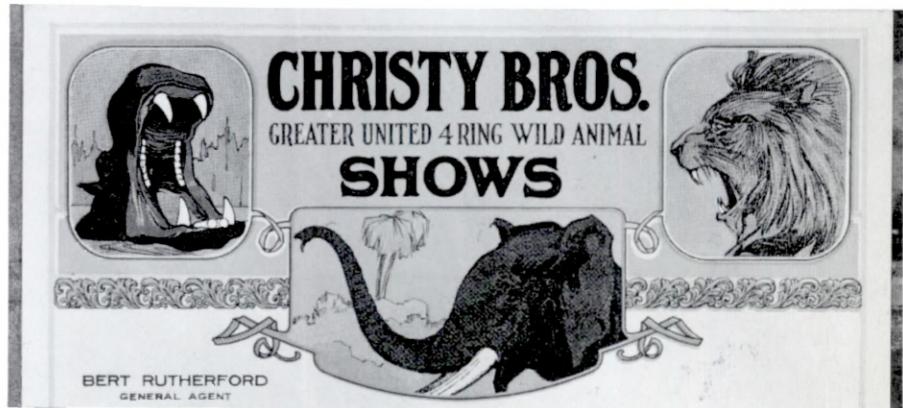
The LaMorts wrote in July, 1907, that their long distance telephone connection with Hall had been unsatisfactory. But they did think that Hall had offered to buy their

show himself if they would "take a little off."

"So come on over," they wrote (LB-WPH 7/18/17) Three days later they sent their Iowa route to Hall.

By the next spring, the deal had been made. The LaMorts wrote to acknowledge the receipt of a \$1,000 payment on a \$3,000 note. (LB-WPH 3/28/18) In a month they were stating that the balance was overdue. (LB-WPH 4/13/18)

Several later letters from other showmen express their interest in buying LaMont equipment which Hall offered for sale.



# THE CLYDE BEATTY JUNGLE ZOO

By Charles A. Sprague

The Clyde Beatty Jungle Zoo was Fort Lauderdale's first major tourist attraction. It drew many thousands of visitors to southern Florida long before Tampa's Busch Zoological Gardens or Miami's Crandon Park Zoo had been conceived. Yet it didn't cost the taxpayers one red cent.

Its predecessor was the McKillop-Hutton Lion Farm which was established in 1935, on the site of an abandoned rock pit north of Fort Lauderdale. McKillop and Hutton weren't showmen. They concentrated their efforts on breeding and training lions for the circus and zoo trade. They apparently weren't businessmen either, for they launched their enterprise at a time when the great depression was forcing many once-prosperous circuses out of business and most zoos were reducing their animal inventories in order to cut expenses. In November 1936, a *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* story invited the public to witness a demonstration of training by Captain LaFrance at the lion farm. Little else is on record concerning this operation.

The disasterous 1938 season threw the Cole Brothers-Clyde Beatty Circus into bankruptcy, and split the Jess Adkins-Zack Terrell-Clyde Beatty triumvirate asunder.

The Associates Investment Company foreclosed a mortgage and thus gained possession of all of the circus physical property, including the animals. Clyde Beatty then purchased the cat animals and three elephants from Associates. This was evidently the first time that Beatty had ever owned the animals which he worked. He had never made big money while working on the Corporation shows, either before or after acquisition by Ringling. But he fared much better financially from between-season motion picture work, and apparently he did a good job of salting it away.

Following the 1938 season, and prior to his winter dates, Beatty took a brief vacation in Florida. While driving along U.S. Route 1, he came upon the McKillop-Hutton farm quite by accident. (This is another indication of McKillop-Hutton's lack of business acumen, for if there ever was a prime prospect for lions, it was Clyde Beatty; yet he had never heard of them). When he stopped to look around, he found a Negro working five lions in flimsy cages

**This photo taken during the opening 1939-40 season shows all of the employees and performers in front of the main entrance. Pfening Collection.**

made of chicken wire. This uninspiring sight revived an idea that had been bugging him for a long time: "I wanted a place where I could settle down after my own active career had ended, to raise animals, possibly train them for other performers, and establish a winter quarters for the Clyde Beatty Wild Animal Circus which had now become a burning ambition."

Clyde Beatty returned the following Spring and bought out McKillop-Hutton. He also acquired additional land and spent about \$85,000 clearing and digging places for grottos, building false mountains, and constructing an African veldt. While this work was in progress, Beatty played a three month summer engagement at the Million Dollar Pier in Atlantic City, and a four week fall date at Baltimore. The zoo opened officially on December 2, 1939.

In Beatty's book, *Jungle Performers*, he modestly describes the zoo as follows:

Located two miles north of Fort Lauderdale, it is encircled by a high bamboo fence. As you enter from the highway you see black and white swans swimming gracefully in several shaded pools. Animal and bird life is all around. Steps rise on either side of a huge waterfall, and at the top you





*Clyde Beatty JUNGLE ZOO  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA*

This photo shows the nicely landscaped walk just inside the main entrance to the Beatty Zoo. Pfening Collection.

can look down on the entire zoo. Across the way flamingos stand motionless. Lions and tigers pace up and down in barless dens behind moats. Leopards and bears range about in separate grottos. Monkeys of all species chatter and scold. The elephants weave and beg for peanuts. Pheasants, peacocks, and demoiselle cranes wander about garden paths. Cockatoos and macaws flit among the palm trees. Passing down the long walkway through the zoo you come to my animal arena, circus ring, and grandstand. Here we give several performances a day. We also have a special exhibit of Florida wild life; little black bears, alligators, pumas, snakes, raccoons, opossums, and other products of the Everglades. All of which adds up to twenty-five acres.

The November 1939, issue of *Fort Lauderdale Facts* was more lavish in its brief description of the zoo:

Two lagoons, each 300 feet long and 100 feet wide, backed by a 40 foot high waterfall, framed by two large

dens of wild animals presents a scene seldom seen elsewhere. Stately royal palms, Cocoanut trees, and other tropical growth abound with wading birds of beautiful plumage. There are 53 lions, tigers, and leopards; plus numerous bears, elephants, chimpanzees, camels, zebras, dogs, and ponies.

Somehow both of these descriptions overlooked the huge hippopotamus, August, who occupied a prominent grotto. He was 15 feet long, stood 4½ feet high, and weighed three tons. This animal was owned by the Ringlings but had been loaned to Frank Buck for his 1939 exhibit at the New York Worlds Fair, then subsequently loaned to Beatty. August arrived at the zoo in November 1939, whereupon he broke loose while being transferred to his permanent quarters and almost escaped into the Middle River. A couple of weeks later he crashed out again and took over one of the lagoons, where he languished and fed upon the expensive shrubbery. He was still at large when the zoo opened, but was permanently corralled on December 6th. Mean-

A large crowd is shown in the wood grandstand during a presentation of the big mixed wild animal act by Clyde Beatty. Pfening Collection.



Harriett Beatty worked the three elephant act, assisted by Eugene "Arky" Scott. The printed program listed Jean Evans as elephant trainer. Pfening Collection.

while, he had scored nationwide headlines for the Beatty zoo and Fort Lauderdale.

Clyde Beatty was then thirty-six years old but was still the picture of youth. When he called on August Burghard, president of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, Burghard thought that this young fellow must be the son of the world-famous animal trainer. When he asked, "Where is your father?" Clyde rolled up his sleeves and pantlegs to show the scars from his many encounters with the big cats. They became great friends, and Beatty named his hippopotamus August in Burghard's honor. (This was told to me personally by August Burghard, and I can find no evidence that this hippopotamus was called August prior to his arrival in Fort Lauderdale).

Clyde and Harriett Beatty loved Fort Lauderdale. They built the first home that they ever owned here, fully expecting this to be "home" for the rest of their days.

During the 1939 Christmas season, Santa Claus arrived in Fort Lauderdale on the Florida East Coast Streamliner. He was welcomed by a retinue which included the three Beatty elephants, Anna Mae, Sidney and Mary. The good saint was then treated to an elephant ride through the business district, to the great delight of the "children of all ages."

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer filmed a feature called *Cat College* at the Beatty zoo in 1940. The film's world premiere was held at a local theater, using props and trappings which were sent directly from the premiere showing of *Gone With the Wind* in Atlanta, Georgia.

The zoo's circus performance consisted of ten acts which were presented twice or, sometimes, three times daily. In addition to Clyde and Harriett, the personnel included Harriett's sister Jean Evans aerialist,





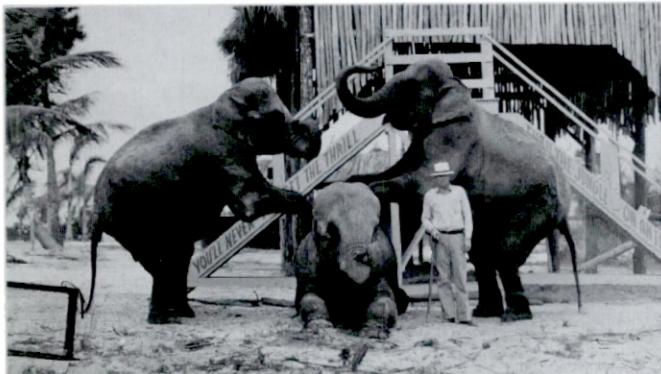
**Chimp trainer Albert Fleet is pictured on this elephant giving rides to children visiting the zoo. Pfening Collection.**

Florenz and Kinko clowns, and Albert Fleet who handled the chimps Mickey and Minnie. Harriett presented her lion and tiger team riding the elephant Anna Mae, and Clyde's big mixed cat act climaxed the performance.

At the close of the winter tourist season each year, the Beatty aggregation would join out with a circus or carnival for a summer tour. In 1940 it was featured on the Hamid-Morton tented circus. During the 1941 and 1942 seasons the Clyde Beatty Wild Animal Circus, which was now a reality, appeared as a separate entity on the Johnny J. Jones Carnival. In 1943 it combined forces with Wallace Brothers Circus, and in 1944 with Russell Brothers. Early in 1945 Beatty bought the Wallace Brothers Circus and retitled the combination The Clyde Beatty Circus. This famous title has been used continuously ever since that time.

The Beatty show brought Fort Lauderdale tremendous national publicity. Clyde was always a staunch booster for his adopted city and he never shirked an opportunity to lend a hand to any civic endeavor. When the Broward County Humane Soci-

**Eugene Scott giving rides to children visiting the zoo. Pfening Collection.**



**The wild animals were exhibited in open natural grottos, the bears are pictured here. Pfening Collection.**

ety was organized he housed their stray dogs in the monkey cages at the zoo until more suitable facilities could be built.

Clyde and Harriett Beatty spent some of the happiest years of their lives in Fort Lauderdale. Local old timers still recall incidents such as the time that Harriett stopped in a downtown dress shop and remarked, "I can't stay long because I left the kitty outside in the car." "Well bring her in," the clerk replied. Harriett went out and returned leading a young tiger. It emptied the shop!

So it went for five pleasant years, while the bonds between Fort Lauderdale and the Beattys grew closer and stronger. It seemed that such a mutually beneficial association could never end.

But as the city grew and extended its boundaries, houses and apartments sprang up around the zoo. In February 1945, City Hall was suddenly besieged by complaints from that area. "The lions roared at night . . . Monkeys escaped and terrified the neighborhood . . . The blare of the loudspeakers was irritating . . . Even the peacock cries were too loud."

These complaints, which were spearheaded by the Victoria Park Improvement Association, were taken before the city commission and argued long and heatedly. Lawsuits were threatened. City officials argued that the zoo had been there first, and had indeed been there when the current owners bought their property. They argued also

that the circus and Beatty name were valuable advertisements for the city. Many prominent citizens supported these views.

Clyde Beatty answered the charges, saying,

I have always tried to cooperate with those people living near the zoo. First they complained about the noise of the peacocks, so I sold them at a loss. Then they were bothered by the loudspeaker, so I revised the system so that it couldn't be heard outside of the zoo. Things were calm for a time, but then they decided that they didn't like the roaring of the lions. Well they've got me there. That's something I can't stop unless I shoot my lions. If they will give me back the \$125,000 that I have invested in this location, I'll move someplace else. But otherwise, I can't afford to. After all, I was here first.

But the vocal minority prevailed. The beleaguered city commission finally gave in and passed a law prohibiting the keeping of wild animals within the city limits. This tolled the knell for the Clyde Beatty Jungle Zoo.

**Albert Fleet and one of his chimps perform in front of the large grandstand. Pfening Collection.**





**The main entrance of the Clyde Beatty Jungle Zoo is shown in 1948 just before destruction. Author's Collection.**

Disillusioned and heartsick, Clyde and Harriett Beatty sold their home and departed with their animals. During the next three years the idle zoo property became an overgrown eyesore. In August 1948 workmen began tearing down structures, cages, and fences in compliance with a city building department condemnation.

Beatty had lingering suspicions that his troubles had been stirred up by real estate developers who coveted his location. He considered developing the property himself, but instead sold it to Thurman B. Starr and Arthur W. Dixon in December 1948. These newly-arrived businessmen, who had no part in Beatty's ouster, built the Gateway Shopping Center on the site.

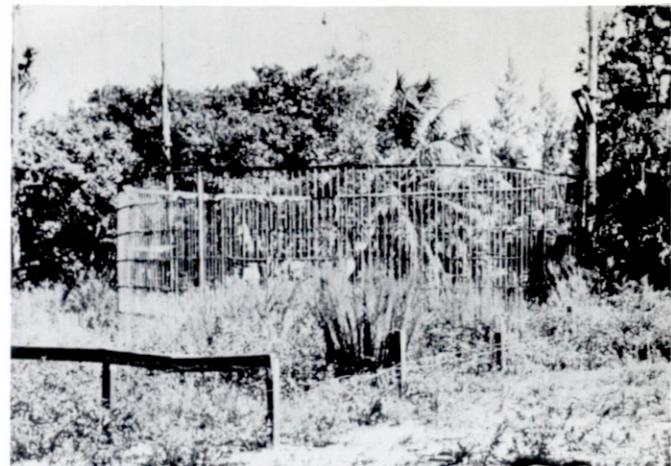
Harriett Beatty died of a heart ailment in 1950. Pursuant to her expressed wishes, she was buried in Fort Lauderdale.

The Clyde Beatty Circus returned to Fort Lauderdale for one day stands almost every year. As late as 1958 Beatty stated that he was still searching for a suitable location in this area to build a new zoo.

During the winter of 1960-1961 he opened a tourist attraction called Clyde Beatty's Jungleland on U.S. Route 1 south of Hollywood, Florida. But it was nothing to compare with the former zoo, and it only lasted for one season.

On one of his last visits to Fort Lauderdale Clyde Beatty stated during an interview, "It's my firm belief that I'll continue

**John Helliot presented this group of lions in the zoo's performance. Pfening Collection.**



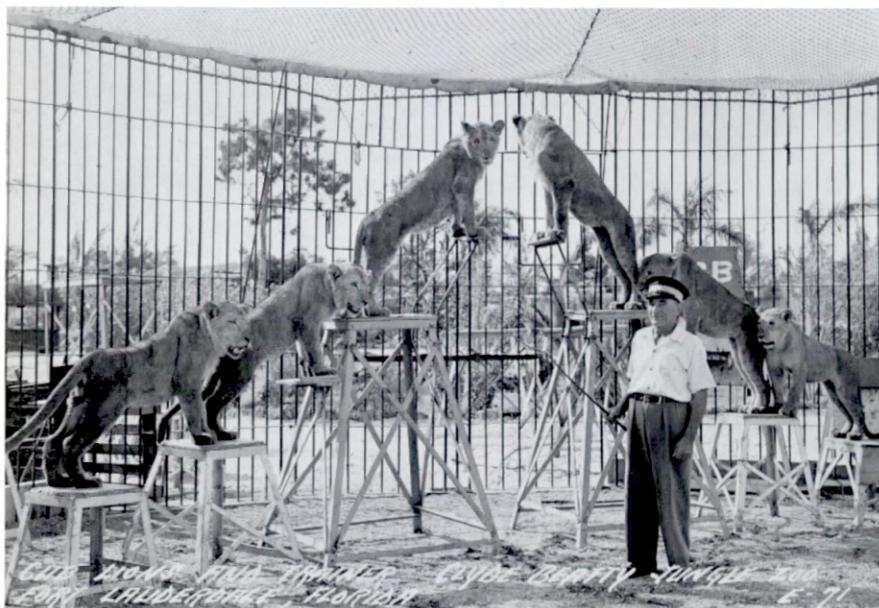
**The wild animal arena is shown in the over grown weeds in 1948 just prior to the land being cleared for the building of the Gateway Shopping Center. Author's Collection.**

working in the arena as long as I can get around, and then eventually die of old age, inertia, or overeating." The first portion of his prediction was certainly correct. But old age, inertia, or overeating were never his problem. After battling, and loving, the big cats for forty years Clyde Beatty died of cancer of the esophagus in 1965. He was sixty-two.

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# ONE SHEET

By Stuart Thayer

The Abbott-Downing Company of Concord, New Hampshire gained its fame as the manufacturer of the Concord Coach. This strong, light and durable vehicle was the standard by which all stagecoaches were measured in the nineteenth century. The company was begun in 1813 by Lewis Downing, a wheelwright, who was joined by J. Stephen Abbott, a coach body builder, in 1826. Together they developed their product so successfully that over three thousand were built before the partners died.

The New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord has five volumes of the order books of Abbott-Downing. During a recent visit to the Society library I inspected these volumes and confirmed that the company had done work for circuses.

The references that tempted me to look into this material were from the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* of May, 1857, *The New York Clipper* of February 23, 1873 and *Billboard* of September 14, 1907.

The *Evening Bulletin* says that Frank Rivers, general agent of Lee and Bennett's North American Circus, had spent a year in the east buying equipment including carriages and baggage wagons from Messrs. J. S. and E. A. Abbott of Concord.

The *Clipper* article refers to the then recent purchase of ten new Concord cages by Van Amburgh and Company.

The *Billboard* explains that Levi J. North's 1854 show was equipped with Concord baggage wagons.

The five volumes preserved at Concord consist of three of wagon orders and two of orders for the famous coach. By the nature of their business the manufacturers had to have quite precise instructions from customers. Just as with the automobile companies today there were any number of options available. In effect, each order was custom-built to the purchaser's specifications.

While the coach buyer had fewer options than the wagon buyer all the specifics had to be a matter of record to assure that what was ordered was delivered and to make re-ordering simple. These repeat orders, preserved along with the initial ones, often said simply, "same as before." Then, too, orders came reading, "A gig like you made for Mister Jones," of which some record was necessary.

Each order was written out under the buyer's name, the specifications listed and the requested delivery date as well as the actual date. Sometimes the price was noted and often the shipping instructions.

I found two circus orders in the records, neither of them having any relation to the references I had with me. The first is dated April 24, 1850 and is titled Rufus Welch, New York. It is an order for six circus wagons made as light as possible. They were to be thirteen feet long and three feet, four inches wide, both inside measurements. The bodies were to be twenty-two inches high. The painting instructions said red with straw colored gear. The wagons were to be lettered, "Welch's Equestrian Establishment." Numbers 7, 10, 14, 15, 16 and 17 were to be painted on them. No cushions were to be furnished and the wagons were to be delivered in six weeks. Actual delivery date was June 6, 1850.

The second order was from C. P. May, Olympia Circus, Montgomery, Alabama September 19, 1850. It was for two wagons, 13 feet long, "made upon same plan as Rufus Welch's." These were to have red bodies and straw gear and be numbered 4 and 5. Another six wagons made the same, but twelve feet long and for only two horses (indicating that the first two were for four horse hitches) were to be painted all red and lettered, "Johnson Co.'s People's Circus." They were to be numbered 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

In addition there was to be a nine foot by eight foot, six inches ticket wagon with an inside height of four feet, eight inches. In this there was a two foot wide door in the back which let down with a small hole in it through which tickets could be passed. This description is confusing but perhaps can be understood by someone more familiar with such things. Also, it is obvious that the ticket seller would have to be very short or would have to sit down

while he worked. There were to be small doors in the side of the wagon with wire screens for draft. Also, an entrance door. The plan was entered in Letter Book 168, which didn't survive, unfortunately. (The company preserved its customers letters in separate volumes).

C. P. May also ordered for the Johnson show a thirty foot pole wagon which was to be number 12. This was to be made however Abbott-Downing chose to make it. The only specification was that it have four half-elliptical springs at each end.

These were to be insured for \$225 each, presumably their cost. They were delivered February 18, 1851, five months in manufacture.

It is interesting that in their newspaper advertising in Ohio in August, 1851 Johnson's show listed an advertising carriage by A. B. Pierson & Co., Montgomery, Alabama, bandwagon by Crawford, Turner & Co., Phoenix Factory, Auburn, Alabama and 12 baggage vans by J. Stephens Abbott, Concord, New Hampshire.

Of the Lee & Bennett, Levi J. North and Van Amburgh references there is no proof at Concord. The order books include the period of the first two, but not that of the Van Amburgh date. This might be explained by the fact that there was at least one other wagon company in Concord during the period. The other obvious explanation is that the items were the dreams of press agents.

What we learn from all this (besides the technical data which I have eschewed, but will supply to interested readers) is that the wagons used by at least two circuses in the early 1850's were the common dray wagons so prevalent in use by commercial wagoners of the period. The closed box wagon was apparently some time in the future. The reason for this may be speculated upon — the bad roads of the era called for light, sturdy wagons. Imagine if you will a Curtis-built baggage wagon of the Corporation era on the bottomless, raw roads of 1850.

S. B. Duncan of Aspen, Colorado recently wrote a short history of the Abbott-Downing Company and in it he included the following:

"Probably the best known of all the Concord coaches was the Deadwood Stage of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. It was built in 1863 and shipped the next year to the Pioneer Stage Company of California. After a hazardous trip around the Horn in the clipper ship *General Grant* it ran several years between San Francisco and the gold fields. Later transferred to Wyoming it covered the Deadwood-Laramie-Cheyenne route. In 1876 it was robbed and abandoned in a canyon in the Rockies. Buffalo Bill, just returned from a scalp-hunting foray, heard of the incident and set out to find the coach. He was successful, and it became a main attraction in his show. Eventually old #150 fell apart from continued hard usage. No one knows what became of it."

As far as is known these are the only connections between the circus and the Abbott-Downing Company. The preservation of the records is almost a story in itself. During the razing of the Concord works a laborer discovered a safe imbedded in an area of concrete flooring. The wreckers broke it open, no doubt hoping to find a treasure, and discovered the order books. That they did find a treasure goes without saying, but doubtless it would be difficult to convince them of it.

(Sources: Volume 1, Wagon Book, Abbott-Downing Collection, New Hampshire Historical Society; S. Blackwell Duncan, "The Legendary Concords," *The American West*, Volume VIII, Number 1, January, 1971)

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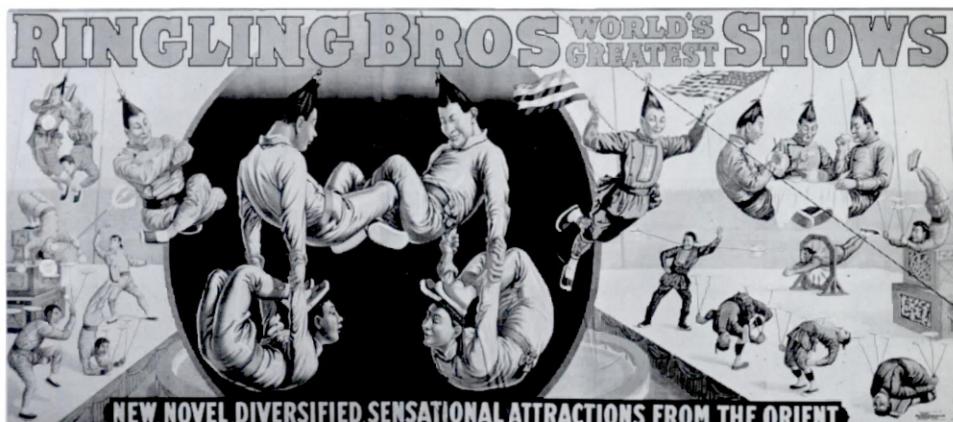
In our series of lithograph spreads we have used one sheet size posters in the past. All of the lithographs reproduced here are larger than one sheet in size.

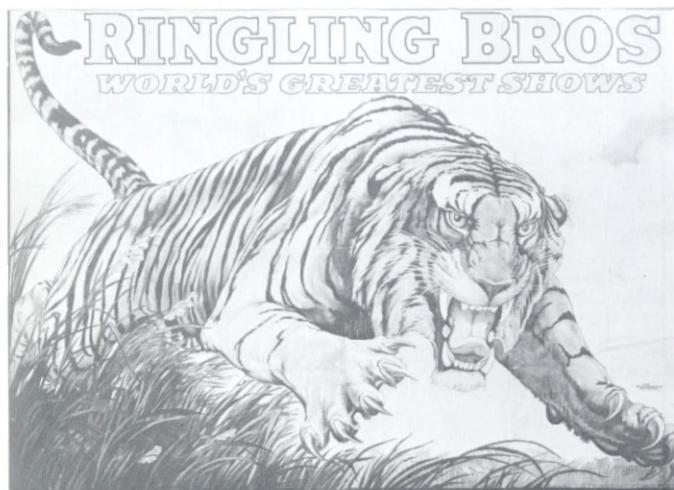
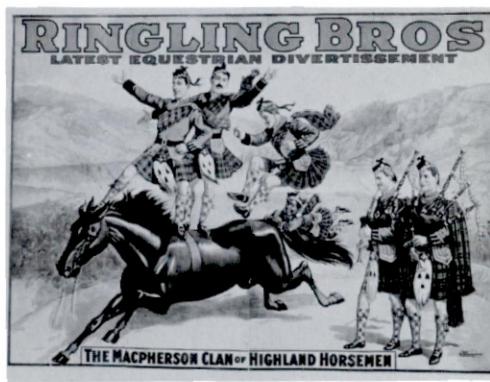
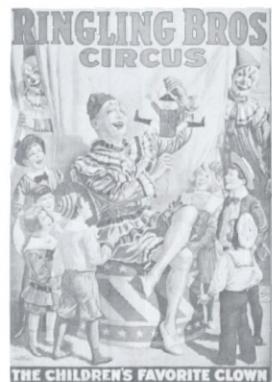
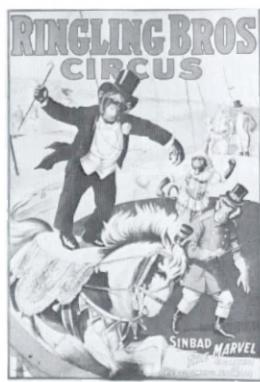
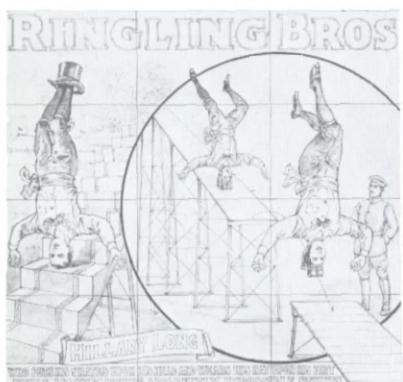
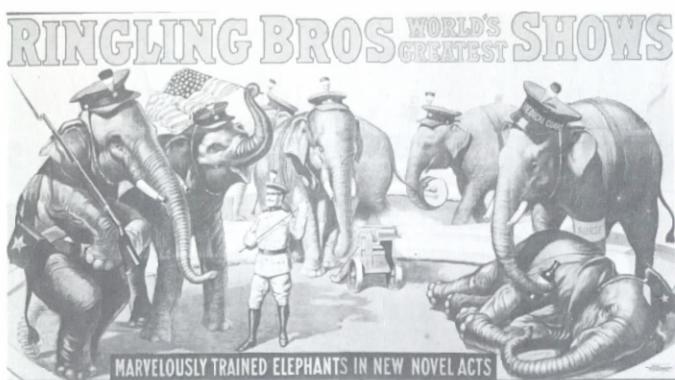
Although some of these designs were also printed in one sheet size, the proportion is changed slightly to fit multiple sheet sizes.

All of these posters were used in 1917 and were printed by the Strobridge Lithograph Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio. These reproductions have been made from official photos from the Strobridge files. The litho photos are now part of the Harold Dunn Collection.

The leaping tiger, polar bear and MacPherson riders bills are 16 sheets. The Australia axmen, Hillary Long and Big Bingo are 12 sheets. The riding dogs, Chinese and lady aerialists are 15 sheets. The Cinderella and performing elephants are 12 sheets of a different shape. The lady rider is a 6 sheet and the Loyal's dogs is a 4 sheet.

This display of bill posting paper will serve as an introduction to a series of articles on advance cars and bill posting that will begin in the Christmas issue.





# The Oriental Influence on the American Circus

By Stuart Thayer

*Author's note: This is part of a longer piece on the Victorian influences on the circus. The first installment, concerning the Egyptian era, appeared in an earlier Bandwagon. Because of the necessity to publish the work in separate installments certain basic statements will be repeated in each article.*

If there is a single person to whom the American circus is connected in time it must be Queen Victoria of Great Britain. She ascended the throne in 1837, just as the circus was leaving its swaddling clothes, and she died in 1901, a few years before the circus began the decline from its greatest era. The English speaking world named most of the century after her and the cultural developments of that time include and affect the circus.

The woman herself had nothing to do with the etymology, of course, her name was merely convenient as nomenclature for the era. And the title, Victorian, is used now as it was not used then, to cover a great number of influences. We lump together cultural aspects that in their day were considered separate and new, each a thing of the future and not related as we consider them to be related now.

The Victorian era actually ended prior to the queen's death. The succeeding cultural era began about 1880, but changes are measured at the source and the actual effect of a cultural influence lingers long after the *avant-garde* has gone on to other things. Greek Revival buildings were built in the middle west after the Civil War and Queen Anne houses were still being constructed there in 1910. We must keep in our minds the slow spread of these innovations.

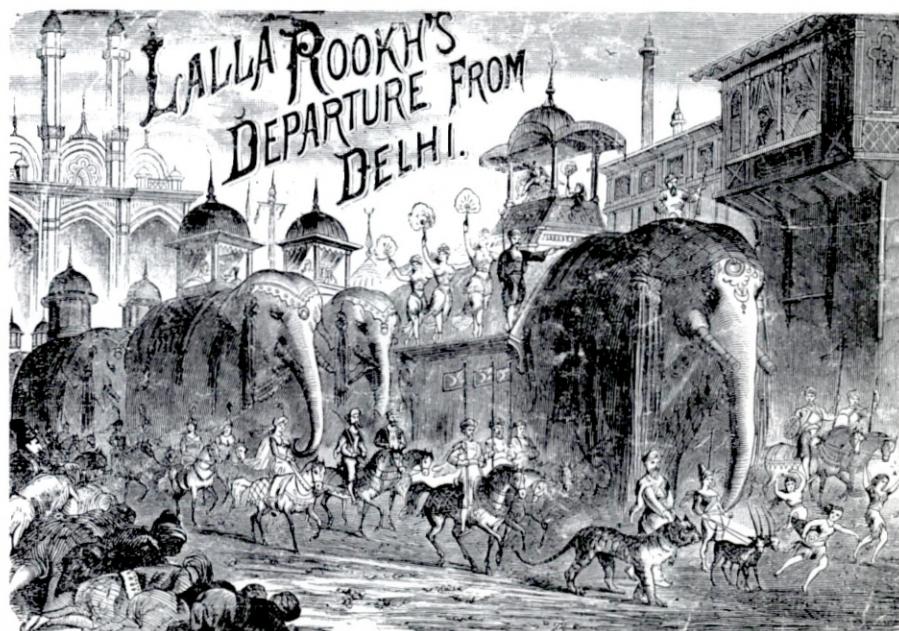
The Egyptian influence upon the American culture gave way about 1845 before the broader, more romantic Oriental influence. By Oriental is meant the Near Eastern-Indian and not the Far Eastern, as modern usage might dictate. Chinese and Japanese culture had to wait for the work of the missionaries before they could intrude in America.

The Oriental movement had several stimuli. The Greek War for Independence in the 1820's focussed a great deal of interest on the Near East. Poets, such as Lord Byron, let their romanticism dwell on Persian intrigues, involving bloody coups and desert rides. Perhaps the best known such works are *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride*



Photo 1: P. T. Barnum used this illustration of his famous home Iranistan on his personal stationery. Reproduced from the 1950 Barnum Festival booklet.

Photo 2: Lalla Rookh's Departure from Delhi was the title of Adam Forepaugh's immensely popular spec in the early 1880's. Fred Pfening, III collection.



of Abydos (1813) and *The Corsair* (1814). Sir Richard Burton, late in the century, travelled widely and wrote of it in books on India and Africa. In 1885 he translated *The Arabian Nights*, a very popular work. Exploration into darkest Africa and British empire activities there and in India were well chronicled. There was almost a continual unmasking of hidden cultures, first by romanticists like Byron and then

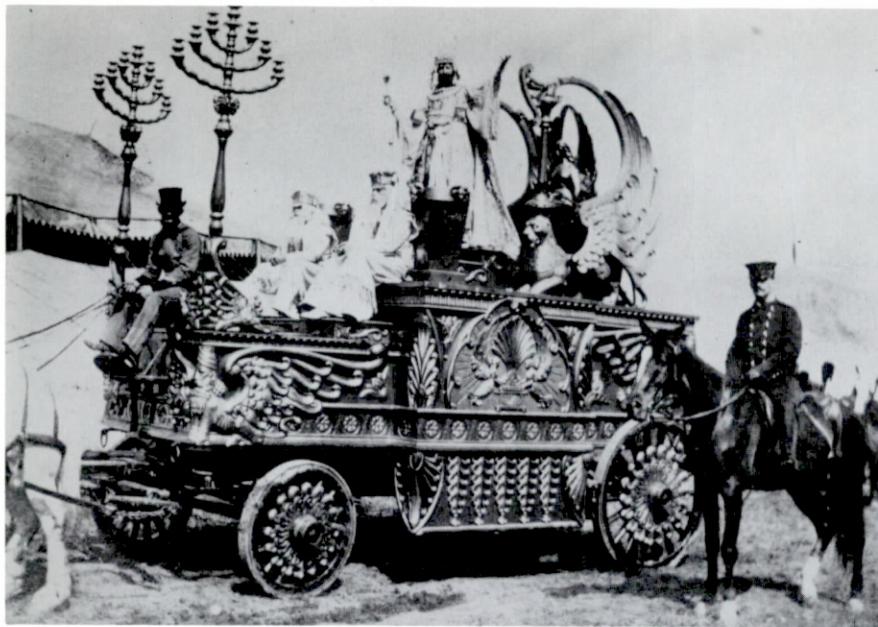
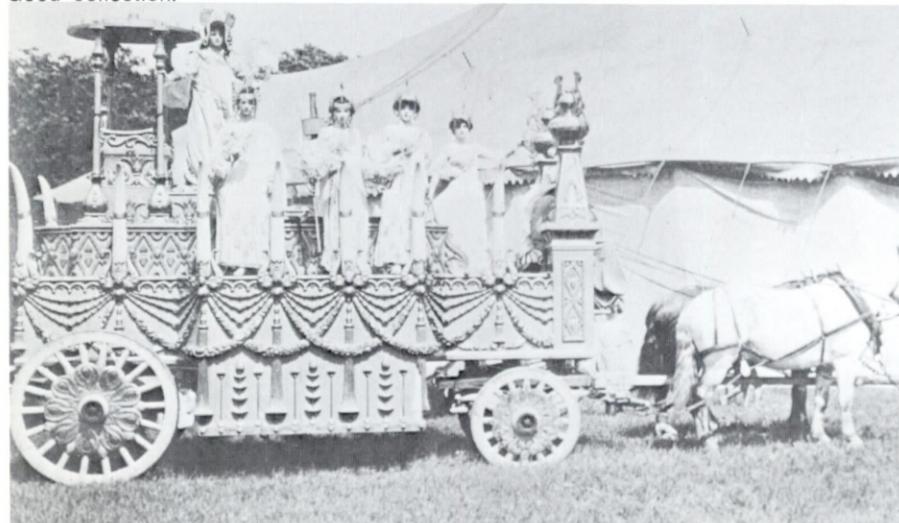


Photo 3: The King's Chariot Tableau exemplified James A. Bailey's interest in Oriental motifs when choosing designs for his big 1903 parade build-up. Bob Good collection.

by men who had actually had experience. From the Campaign in Egypt in 1798 to the Siege of Peking in 1905 the mysterious, queer, exotic Orient was before the public in one form or another.

In America architecture and decoration adopted a decided oriental flavor. Rooms were decorated with "Turkish corners" where sofas with large pillows and oriental rugs were piled in antiseptic imitation of the harem or the bedouin tent. Buildings were constructed of wood in imitation of the stone of eastern temples. P. T. Barnum's

Photo 4: The Balkis tableau is another example of Oriental influence in the 1903-1904 Barnum and Bailey parades. Bob Good collection.



famous home "Iranistan" (photo 1) is an excellent example, and fortunate in combining our subject and the circus. Other architectural examples are, or recently were, extant. The Horticultural Hall in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, relic of the 1876 Centennial, was torn down as recently as 1955. The Tampa Bay Hotel in Florida (now the University of Tampa) and the Isaac M. Wise synagogue in Cincinnati are other examples.

The Oriental influence suited the circus for it was the showmen's desire to interest the public with the exotic and mysterious. The houris, odalisques, mahouts, zouaves, bedouins, fakirs, spahis and berbers abstracted from the near east and joined by berobed camels and elephants were made to order for the field shows. Great spectacles were designed around them. Adam Forepaugh's "Lallah Rookh's Departure from Delhi", John Robinson's "Sheba and Solomon" and Barnum & Bailey's of the same name are examples of the type. Ringling-Barnum produced one involving Frank Buck, the animal dealer, in 1938.



Photo 6: An early example of Oriental influences on parade wagons was the 1848 Welch, Delavan & Nathans' bandchariot. Albert Conover collection.

Lallah Rookh is the heroine of Thomas Moore's poem of the same name, published in 1817. The daughter of the emperor of Delhi, she is betrothed to a sultan who disguises himself as a poet and tells her four long tales which are the body of the poem. She falls in love with the poet and then is pleasantly surprised to find out he is her betrothed.

This was a very popular poem, used in recitations and schools, and the outline of which was familiar to a great many people. Forepaugh used the maiden's entourage as the frame for the opening spectacle, or "spec," for his show in 1881 and 1883. It was an idea with merit, especially with the added filip of having a contest to determine



Photo 7: Oriental influences were strong in a group of small parade wagons built for the Ringling show in the early 1900's. The India float is pictured here. Glasier photo. Ringling Museum of the Circus.

the lady who played the heroine. Photo 2 shows a newspaper cut advertising the spectacle against a background of minarets.

The subject of the meeting between Sheba and Solomon was of even greater common currency as it is a biblical story (The Book of Kings). Several circuses used it as the theme of a spec or a drama and Barnum & Bailey in 1903 built their parade around it. The famous series of wagons built for that year by the Sebastian Wagon Company included a King's chariot for Solomon (photo 3) and a Balkis tableau for Sheba (Balkis being the Mohamedan name for the lady) (photo 4). In 1914 Ringling Brothers had a similar presentation, albeit without the tableau wagons, and photo 5 shows a one-sheet lithograph used to advertise the fact.

When bandwagons were first used their expense and novelty led to their being given names — at least in advertising matter — and befitting the times some had oriental designations. In 1848 Welch, Delavan and Nathans used the wagon in photo 6 which they called the Imperial Persian

Photo 9: Another example of small wagons reflecting an Oriental design on the Ringling show was the Persia float. Bill Woodcock collection.

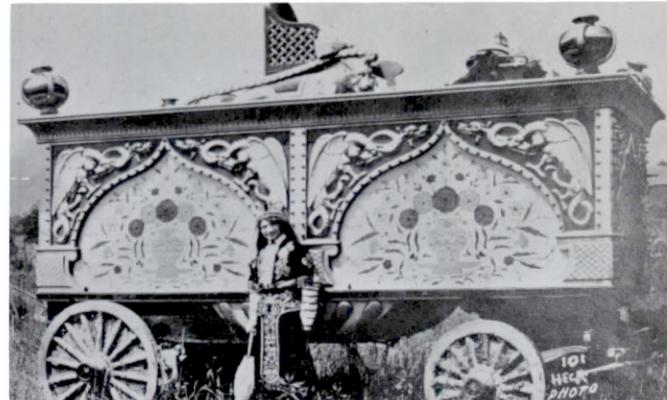


Photo 8: The India float was rebuilt into this tableau, perhaps in connection with the 1914 spec. Chappie Fox collection.

descriptions of parades in the period 1840 to 1860 use the words Oriental, Hindoo, Persian and East India alone or in combination.

In 1903 Ringling Brothers added several floats to their parade of a purely decorative type, three of which were given Oriental names. Photo 7 is of the India float and its wooden copies of the stone lace-work of Indian architecture complete with onion-shaped corner ornamentation. About 1910 this float was rebuilt into a baggage-carrying tableau which is shown in photo 8.

The Persia float (photo 9) of this series appears to be decorated in a manner invented by the wagon maker as none of its components have any relationship to the desert kingdom. Parts of this float were used on the tableau made from the Egypt float when it was rebuilt in 1910.

The Turkey float (photo 10) is still somewhat of an enigma as our example is the only photograph found of it to this time. What detail we can discern indicates that like the Persia float the decorations are Turkish only in nomenclature. They ap-



Photo 5: This 1914 Ringling one-sheet lithograph reflects the industry's continuing interest in Oriental themes. Fred Pfenning collection.

Chariot (they also called it the Armamaxa, which may have been bad Latin, but has a fine showman's sound). Sands, Lent & Company called theirs the East India Car in 1850. In addition, most advertising

Photo 10: While photographs of the Ringling's India and Persia floats are common, this 1905 picture is the only one known of the Turkey wagon from the same series. Albert Conover collection.





Photo 11: Elephant carvings on wagons were a popular theme in the early 1900's. The Bode Wagon Company built this example for the Carl Hagenbeck Circus. Bill Woodcock collection.

pear to be examples of Art Nouveau.

Two wagons built in 1905, one by Bode for Carl Hagenbeck (photo 11), the other show-built by Sells-Floto (photo 12), had the same theme and much the same content in their carvings. Each showed a large

elephant and a mahout and it would be interesting to know why they are so similar. The Hagenbeck entry was called the India tableau and the name could have applied to the other as well.

Turkey, Persia, India, names that are still somewhat exotic today, but were the equivalent of Mars and the moon to the public of fifty and a hundred years ago. The showmen, ever seeking the novel and different, took upon themselves the task of

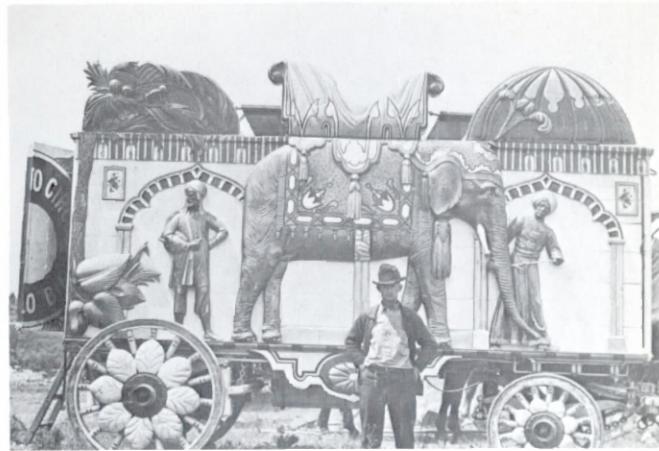


Photo 12: The Sells-Floto and Al G. Barnes Circuses also used elephant tablauas. This 1915 picture shows the Sells-Floto wagon. Bill Woodcock collection.

bringing these romantic places to towns like Red Wing, Dubuque and Prairie View. What they actually brought were costumes and decorated wooden wagons, but the public accepted them as Solomon and Sheba and Lallah Rookh and filled the tents to view them.

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